

RURAL REPOSITORY.

VOL. II.

HUDSON, SATURDAY, APRIL 15, 1826.

No. 23.

" Prompt to improve and to invite,
" We blend instruction with delight."—POPE.

POPULAR TALES.

" To virtue if these Tales persuade,
" Our pleasing toil is well repaid."

FOR THE RURAL REPOSITORY.

The Lawyer's Port Folio.

NO. I.

THE CATASTROPHE.

John Thompson was a respectable farmer of Connecticut. He was the father of a large family, who were growing up around him and to whom he gave such an education as his limited means would allow. Blessed with no great capacity, he toiled early and late for a comfortable subsistence for his offspring and to lay up a little against a rainy day. His ambition extended no farther than the procuring a good crop from his farm and his happiness was bounded by the comforts of his fireside. Not so his good dame. She was equally industrious, but had more of the pride of human nature about her. Neighbour so and so had such a thing and why could not she have it? One neighbour went to church in a chaise and another had bought a new carpet and she was sure her good man could afford it as well as they. Her good man however, had firmness enough to resist her entreaties and to continue to have a little money at interest and a few dollars always by him. All things went on well until a son was born to them—an only son! The fond mother anticipated for him, a splendid fortune. He was her all—what should she do without him? The girls could take care of themselves, but this darling boy must be well provided for—he should be a lawyer and who knew but that he might live to be a justice and perhaps a county judge? Why might not he rise to such preferment as well as a hundred others? Such were the glowing colours in which the good lady's imagination pictured the future fate of her favorite child; and he grew up under the fatal indulgence of his misguided mother, a wild and wayward boy. He soon outstripped the authority of a fond mother and a weak father, and contemned the affection of a circle of anxious sisters. One alone—his younger sister Lucy, appeared to be dear to him. He evinced for her the kindness of a spoiled child for he was not always harsh to her. Often in his early years, had he unburthened his little griefs to her and often had she appeased the anger of his offended parents, when it had been excited by some vice or folly of his youth. Even her kindness however

could not restrain the evil propensities of his nature or correct the faults of a bad education, and he early became the bully of the neighbourhood for five miles round—the champion of every cock fight—the attendant of every horse race—and the leader of every midnight gang. His intoxication broke the peace of his family, and his folly and extravagance exhausted the purse of his father. Every new offence however seemed but to add to the fondness and indulgence of his mother. She hoped still it was only the wildness of youth and that a few years would reform his errors and find him the man her fancy had pictured him. For what can destroy the affection of a mother? Nor sickness, nor death—neither sorrow, nor crime, nor ingratitude can ever alter the fondness with which a mother cherishes the being she has brought into the world, the child, she has nourished from the fountain of her own life. She will rejoice in his success, with a heart full of gratitude to heaven for its blessings. She will sympathize with his sorrows, with a depth of feeling, which none but a mother can know. She will apologize for his vices with a charity which a mother alone can feel and mourn over his corpse and "refuse to be comforted."

Such and so intense was her affection, even when informed that her Richard was confined on a charge for highway robbery—that his guilt was confirmed beyond doubt and that he could be saved from an immediate and horrid death only by the payment of a large sum of money and his enlisting as a soldier!

Time rolled on, and the respectable old farmer was borne in sorrow to the grave, before he had lived long enough to feel the poverty brought upon him by the guilt of his unhappy son. His wife soon followed him, spending her last breath in a prayer for her darling child. The family were dispersed and Lucy, the kind and affectionate sister, mourned with long and silent sorrow, the uncertain fate of a brother who had seemed to single her out as the only object of his love on earth. Time, with its healing wings, however cicatrized the wound, and the cares of her own family, the kindness of an affectionate husband and the endearments of her children, left but little trace behind. Still would she sometimes weep for his errors and long to know if he was yet among the living.

Richard had in the meantime experienced all the vicissitudes of a soldier's life, and had sought to drown in the dissipation of a camp,

the memory of his former state. He had been engaged in many "fierce fought fields" and no bullet seemed commissioned from heaven to remove him. He was reserved for a different fate. Peace, again smiled on this land and Richard bent his steps to the home of his infancy. He was accompanied on his route, by some of his companions in arms and wickedness. They journeyed on their way, supporting themselves by depredations on all around them. On one night, they had been more successful than usual. They had robbed a farm house, which they found occupied only by some children. Not far from the house they met a woman apparently returning to her home. Drunk with wine and mad with success, they vented their brutal passions upon her and fled. The hand of heaven was however upon them. The whole country was alarmed and they were arrested. The wretched woman was called to identify the ruffians and in her brutal ravisher, Lucy recognized her Brother!

A SOLDIER'S REVENGE.

The decree of the French Convention, that one third of the officers of the army should be named by the government was very ill received by the troops, who saw in it a new infringement on that liberty which they had bought at the expense of so many crimes; and what rendered the measure still more disgusting to them was, that the officers thus named, who were generally the minions of some great man, were in most cases very unfit for the situation which favor, not merit, had procured them. It was indeed no unusual thing to see a beardless boy, one of the half-monkey and half-tiger class, so common in those days, put over the head of one whose numerous scars ought to have entitled him to the rank thus unjustly wrested from him.

These intruders were, however, mostly made to pay dearly for their elevation; every means fair and foul, being used by the other officers to disgust them with their situation, and compel them to abandon it. If, as was generally the case, they were men of courage, they were soon provoked into a duel, and this usually settled the matter one way or other; for if they had the good luck to kill their antagonist, they were suffered to remain in peace afterwards.

It was during this epoch that Charles La Croix, a young man of good family, was named to the captaincy of a regiment stationed in Provence. His appointment was peculiarly disagreeable to the officers of that regiment, because they were all extremely attached to their first lieutenant: they had joined unanimously in recommending him to the Convention for the vacant company, which, to say the truth, he well merited by the services he had rendered his country; services of which his scars presented abundant testimonials. The officers espoused his cause with more than com-

mon eagerness; and it was determined *nem. con.* to make unusually short work with the new intruder.

La Croix presented himself at the colonel's house, wholly unsuspecting of the persecution which awaited him. That officer had need of all his prejudices against the new comer to enable him to persist in the resolution he had formed of receiving him very coldly. He was a noble looking youth of about twenty-two, whose handsome, manly countenance was rendered extremely prepossessing by a blended expression of frankness, bravery and benevolence. He presented himself to his colonel with a mixture of modesty and self respect in his air which shook for a moment that gentleman's resolution; but the entrance of the other officers, who had heard of the arrival of the new-comer, and who all on some pretence or other flocked in to behold him, recalled it to his mind.

"I hope, sir," cried he in an austere tone, "you will pay proper attention to the duties of your command; and that you will not attempt to introduce into my regiment the vices of Paris"—"colonel," replied the young man with an ingenuous blush, "I trust that you will have reason to be satisfied with me. I shall endeavor to follow the example of my comrades, and I hope that my efforts to gain their regard will obtain for me the benefit of their advice, which I am certain I must, from my inexperience, have great need of."—"Sir," replied the colonel roughly, "you would have acted more wisely if you had acquired the experience you must be so much in want of before you took upon yourself the command of a company. It is more than indiscreet in a boy who has hardly quitted school, to put himself over the heads of brave and experienced men. Look at your first lieutenant, and judge how painful it must be to him to see himself commanded by one of your age, by a mere novice in a profession of which he is thorough master."

"I feel all the truth of your observations," replied La Croix in a modest but firm tone; "but do me the justice, sir, to believe that I am not here by my own choice. I would gladly have contented myself with an inferior rank, but my patron thought it beneath him to solicit any thing under a captaincy.—If, however, colonel, you find my inexperience renders me unfit for the duties of my post, I shall certainly resign it."

The colonel turned his back upon him without reply. La Croix then addressed himself to Valmont, the first lieutenant, and begged him to present him to his brother officers. "You are old enough to introduce yourself, sir," was the answer delivered in the most obliging tone. It brought a blush of anger into the young man's face; but recollecting himself, and perceiving no friendly expression in any countenance round him, he bowed and retired.

Next day, according to the usual custom, he called upon each of the officers. They had expected this visit, and they took their measures accordingly. He had the mortification to hear them tell their servants one after another, in a tone evidently meant for his ear, that they were not at home. They met him at the parade with averted or insolent looks; no one returned his civilities, or even answered his questions. If at the coffee-house he proposed to one of them a game at billiards, he was refused, and directly afterwards another was accepted without the slightest apology being made to him. In short they sent him completely to Coventry; or rather they did still more, they evinced the most determined resolution to quarrel with him if possible.

For some time La Croix endured this treatment in silence, but to judge from the expression of his eloquent countenance, not without feeling very severe mortification; particularly when one day a stranger, who was playing at billiards with Valmont at the coffee-house, asked his opinion on a doubtful point of the game, and just as he was about to give it, Valmont interrupted him by exclaiming, "I protest against that gentleman's opinion in any thing that concerns me"—"And for what reason?" cried a young ensign, who thought that he now saw the moment to force La Croix to fight—"Because," replied the lieutenant scornfully, "I like him not." At these words La Croix fixed his eyes upon Valmont with an expression of fierceness which was almost immediately succeeded by a look of sorrow. He was evidently on the point of breaking out; but constraining himself by a strong effort, he quitted the coffee-house without speaking, and from that day entered it no more.

"O the poltroon!" said Valmont looking after him, "there's no provoking him to draw his sword."—"It is singular enough," cried the young ensign, who had tried to draw him into a quarrel by the insidious question he put to Valmont, "for he is certainly no coward."

"How, no coward! a fellow who puts up with every insult is not a coward? You joke."—"No faith, I do not; and if you had seen his look when you told him so plumply that you did not like him, you would agree with me that he must be brave at bottom." Valmont replied only by a look of incredibility, and the conversation dropped.

Although the amiable manners of La Croix had failed to conciliate the minds of his comrades, they gained him the good will of all the gentry of the town, to whom his situation and the respectability of his birth and connexions introduced him. Among those who shewed him particular marks of attention was General Bellegarde, a veteran officer, who had known his father, and who invited him to consider his house as his own. This acquaintance was extremely agreeable to the young man: the general had an amiable wife and two charming

daughters, with whom he soon found himself domesticated; and they on their part were so pleased with him, that the veteran said to him one day with the frankness of a soldier. "We look upon you already as one of ourselves."

These words delighted La Croix, on whom the charms of Eugenie, the second daughter, had made a very strong impression. He opened his heart to the general, and had the satisfaction to hear, that if he could make himself agreeable to the lady, he had nothing to fear from her parents, the consent of his own being understood.

The notice taken of La Croix by the gentry of the town, and, above all, the consideration which he enjoyed in the Bellegarde family, were a fresh cause of irritation to his enemies: he was, however, so punctual in the discharge of his duties, and so much upon his guard, that some weeks elapsed without their being able to draw him into a quarrel, at last an opportunity presented itself.

A squadron of hussars, with whom the regiment had some time before been in garrison at the frontiers, came to share their quarters in Provence. The officers of La Croix's regiment invited the others to a dinner at the mess. La Croix was one of the company; and the cavalry officers, who were not blinded by prejudice, were delighted with his frank and social manners. The applause given to his lively sallies, and the laughter which his bon-mots excited, provoked some of the most inveterate of his enemies to turn him into ridicule. But he replied with so much good humoured drollery, and turned the laugh against them in a manner at once so clever and so free from asperity, that they could find no fair pretence to insult him—The officers of hussars shook him heartily by the hand, and shewed so much admiration of his conduct, that Valmont's anger was inflamed to the highest pitch. "What, St Maur!" cried he abruptly, addressing one who seemed the most delighted with La Croix, "you who have gained your epaulets at the point of your sword, you who have so many honorable wounds as testimonials of your services, can you suffer yourself to be dazzled by the frothy nothings of a man who owes his promotion to favour alone?"

"How!" cried St. Maur, briskly drawing back his chair, which was close to that of La Croix, "is it really possible that you belong to a class which all brave men detest?"

"Yes, captain; it is unfortunately true, that my commission is neither the meed of my services, nor the fruit of the suffrages of my companions. God knows how often I have regretted that it should be so, and how impatiently I wait for an opportunity of proving to my comrades, that I am not unworthy to march with them under the banners of my country."

"That is all very well for the future," said St. Maur coldly; "but it is nothing to the purpose at present. Valmont has insulted you,

and there is but one way in which you can answer him. "What!" added he more warmly, seeing that La Croix remained silent. "Would you prove yourself insensible to the honor of a Frenchman?"—"He is a coward," cried the lieutenant.

Without noticing this speech, La Croix said to St. Maur, "I should indeed prove myself insensible to honor were I to commit a base action; but I defy the world to prove me guilty of one."

"What, you do not think it base to suffer yourself to be called a coward?"

"No; for if abuse dishonored a man, whose name would be unstained? The most illustrious patriots, the greatest heroes, might then be dishonored by the folly of a drunkard, or the infamous language of a blackguard."

"Ah! pshaw! all this sort of abstract reasoning does very well in the discussions of philosophers, or the writings of moralists; but we learn a different lesson in the school of honor. In a word our creed is, that an insult leaves a stain which can only be effaced by the blood of the insulter. Such has always been the custom of the army, and he who enters it must conform to its usages."

"I beg your pardon, this custom is not so ancient as you suppose: the Greeks and Romans—"

"What the devil have we to do with them? The customs of France are the only customs that Frenchmen ought to follow. But what need of all this prosing about such a trifle? It is clear enough that you must fight your antagonist, or he must apologize to you, or—"

"I apologize?" cried Valmont, interrupting him, "never!"

"Very well, then, M. La Croix, you must either fight or quit the regiment."

"I hope to settle the affair without doing either one or the other, by bringing back my comrade to sentiments more just to me, and more honorable to himself."

He turned to the door; but Valmont called to him in an imperious tone. "Before you go, sir, I expect that you will name the hour and place where you will meet me to-morrow to decide our difference."

"M. Valmont, I know you to be a brave, and I would willingly think you an honorable man: take then, I request you three days to reflect on this subject; to ask yourself coolly and dispassionately, how far this thirst for the blood of a man who never injured you is consistent with true honor. I hope at the end of that time to find you in a more just way of thinking, and that you will assist me to convince these gentlemen, that it is not necessary to shed blood because a word has been dropped inconsiderately." At these words cries of indignation resounded from all present, and La Croix left the room, while they were swearing that he should fight or quit the regiment.

The slights with which they had before

treated him were nothing to the insolent contempt they shewed for him during the three following days, and the patience with which he supported it appeared in their eyes a meanness that nothing could justify. The general had been immediately informed of what had passed, and full of the prejudices of the military profession, he remonstrated with him in the strongest terms upon his conduct, and ended by forbidding him his house till he had wiped out the stain upon his honor. Eugenie was forbidden to see or write to him; but for the first and only time the gentle girl disobeyed the will of her parent, by conveying a line to La Croix expressive of her approbation of his conduct, and of her hope that heaven would give him strength of mind to persevere in it. His heart swelled with a mingled sensation of pleasure and pain as he read this letter. "Yes, dearest Eugenie," cried he, "you and you alone understand me, and in your approbation of my conduct I could find a balm for the unjust scorn with which I am treated; but, alas! how long shall I be able to preserve that approbation so precious to my heart? how long shall I be able to defend myself against the commission of a crime at which I shudder?"

When the three days were expired, he entered the coffee-house at the moment that all the officers were assembled. "M. Valmont," said he, addressing his antagonist, "I hope that I now find you in a disposition to appreciate more justly the motives of my conduct. I am satisfied that in your heart you acquit me of cowardice; but I frankly avow, that a duel inspires me with horror, and never will I willingly raise my arm but against the enemies of my country. I do not ask you for any apology. I am willing to bury the past in oblivion; accept my hand, and let us be friends."

"I shall never be friends with a man who acts like a poltroon."

"Then I must fight?"

"To be sure you must," cried all the officers at once

"Very well then, let our difference be decided to-morrow morning at six o'clock, in presence of three officers of our corps and three of the hussars. As the party challenged I ought to have the choice of weapons; but I waive it."

"If I am to name them, I say swords."

Valmont smiled with a peculiar expression in his countenance, and retired without making any observation.

"So then," cried St. Maur, "we have at last provoked this pretty gentleman to run the chance of being let blood." "I think," cried another of the officers, "it is doubtful after all." "No," cried Valmont, "whatever strange notions the fellow has got in his head, I do firmly believe he is no coward. The tone of his voice, the firmness of his look, assure me of his courage; and I should be almost sorry to have used him as I have done, if I did not con-

sider that after all he will have an equal chance with myself for his life." "Provided," cried one of the officers drily, "he is as good a swordman"—Valmont reddened, but made no reply.

The following morning the lieutenant and the other officers were on the ground exactly at the appointed time; where in less than two minutes they were joined by La Croix, who took a letter from his pocket, and presented it to St. Maur, requesting that, if he fell, it might be given to General Bellegarde. The combat then began; Valmont was an excellent swordsman, but he soon found that he had to do with his master. At first he fought with great temper; but soon abandoning himself to the fury of his resentment, he made the most desperate passes, and left himself so open to his adversary, that La Croix might repeatedly have taken life; but it was evident, that he acted, merely on the defensive and avoided even wounding him.

"Let us have done with this child's play," said the enraged Valmont at last: "you knew what you were about when you agreed to fight with swords; but if you are not dead to every sentiment of true honor, give me a fair chance, and let us take pistols."

La Croix looked at him with horror. "O my God!" cried he, "how much more barbarous is man, under the influence of blind rage, than the most savage of animals! You still thirst for my blood. Well then, unjust man, satisfy yourself if you can."

Pistols were produced; they tossed up for the first fire; the chance fell to Valmont; he fired, and missed. La Croix turned round and taking direct aim at a tree thirty paces distant, lodged the bullet in its breast high.

A cry of mingled astonishment and admiration burst forth from all the officers: "Sdeath" cried Valmont, "this is not to be borne! I will not receive my life at your hands; I insist upon your firing."

"Be satisfied, M. Valmont; you have gained one point; you have succeeded in bringing me into the field, heaven knows, sorely against my will; but I entered it with a firm determination not to raise my hand against your life insult me as you please, you shall not provoke me to break my resolution."

Overcome by these words, Valmont stammered out, "I am to blame."—"But I am more so," cried La Croix, interrupting him; "I ought not to have suffered any provocation to draw me into an action so contrary to my principles. Thus you have lowered me in my own eyes, and I am determined to have my revenge; for I swear to you, that, from this moment, I shall not cease to seek your friendship till I compel you to grant it to me."

"It is yours already," said the subdued Valmont; "yes, La Croix, the promise of your friendship is the only thing that could reconcile me to myself: that could give me courage to

avow the injustice, the barbarity of my conduct to you—conduct which I now publicly declare to have been unworthy of a gentleman and soldier, and for which I sincerely ask your pardon."

It was granted with a hearty shake of the hand. The other officers flocked round La Croix, eager to solicit his friendship, and to prevail on him to be present at an entertainment which they determined to give in his honor. He would have declined this public acknowledgment of the superiority of his conduct, but they were too pressing to be refused; he agreed to accept it, and they all returned amicably to the parade together.

The subsequent conduct of Valmont proved, that he was not unworthy of the generous forgiveness he had received. He published every where the particulars of the rencontre, and gave to his antagonist all the merit which was so justly his due. The old general was delighted; he declared that the nuptials of his daughter and La Croix should be celebrated the moment the consent of his father was obtained—"Ah!" cried Eugenie, extending her hand to La Croix, "heaven be praised that thou art safe! I will not reproach thee, but yet—"—"But yet I should have done better not to have met him; is that not what my Eugenie meant to say?"—"Yes." "Foolish girl!" said the general, frowning.—"No," cried La Croix, "she is right. I have but half acquitted myself to my conscience; it is only in refusing a challenge altogether that a man can prove himself possessed of true courage."

THE TRAVELLER.

"He travels and expatiates as the bee
"From flower to flower, so he from land to land."

OF THE HAGUE AND ROTTERDAM.

Nothing can be more agreeable than travelling in Holland. The whole country appears a large garden; the roads are well paved, shaded on each side with rows of trees, and bordered with large canals, full of boats passing and repassing. Every twenty paces gives you the prospect of some villa, and every four hours that of a large town, so surprisingly neat, I am sure you would be charmed with them. The Hague is certainly one of the finest villages in the world. Here are several squares finely built, and (what I think a particularly beauty) the whole set with thick large trees. The *Poor-hout* is, at the same time, the Hyde-Park and Mall of the people of quality; for they take the air in it both on foot and in coaches.

The appearance of Rotterdam gives one very great pleasure. All the streets are paved with broad stones, and before many of the meanest artificers' doors are placed seats of various coloured marbles, so neatly kept, that I assure you I walked almost over the town yesterday, *incognito*, in my slippers, without

receiving one spot of dirt ; and you may see the Dutch maids washing the pavement of the streets with more application than ours do our bed-chambers.

The town seems so full of people, with such busy faces, all in motion, that I can hardly fancy it is not some celebrated fair ; but I see it is every day the same. It is certain no town can be more advantageously situated for commerce. Here are seven large canals, on which the merchant ships come up to the very doors of their houses. The shops and ware-houses are of a surprising neatness and magnificence, filled with an incredible quantity of fine merchandise, and so much cheaper than what we see in England, that I have much ado to persuade myself I am still so near it. Here is neither dirt nor beggary to be seen. One is not shocked with those loathsome cripples so common in London, nor teased with the importunity of idle persons that choose to be nasty and lazy. The common servants and little shop-women here are more nicely clean than some of our Ladies ; and the great variety of neat dresses (every woman dressing her head after her own fashion) is an additional pleasure in seeing the town.—*Lady M. W. Montague.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

" Variety we still pursue,
" In pleasure seek for something new."

FOR THE RURAL REPOSITORY.

MR. EDITOR,

Having noticed a piece in the Providence Ladies Museum, upon the honors and advantages of matrimony to the *female* part of community ; the sentiments corresponding with my own, and being convinced of their correctness by the observation of many years : I am induced to send it to you for publication, hoping you will confer the favor of giving it an insertion in your interesting, and I may say with propriety useful paper. Notwithstanding Mr. Editor, I am of the opposite sex, and enjoying a "single life of blessedness"—I am, and trust ever shall be, a great admirer of the fair and in my opinion, better part of creation.

A BACHELOR.

Mr. Maxcy,

SIR—Encouraged by the many proofs of courtesy to our sex, which you have exhibited on many occasions, I am tempted to pen a few lines for your insertion. I have read, with considerable interest, a communication inserted in your paper and also a very flattering introduction, purporting to be written by a female who, (if opposed to that numerous and respectable part of this community, denominated Old Bachelors and Old Maids,) was very happy in her selection. I am very willing to admit, that what was there stated *might* have been true, for it is possible ; but then to compare it with every wedded couple, you would find that ninety-

nine times out of a hundred, it would come far short of any thing like a fair comparison. I am also willing to admit, that marriage, in many cases, is the most natural, innocent and useful state, if it can be formed to advantage. It then bids fairest for that little portion of happiness which this life admits ; and is in some degree a duty, which we owe the world. How defenceless is a *single* woman ! She cannot move beyond the precincts of her own house, without apprehension. She cannot go with ease or safety into public. As she goes down the hill of life, her friends gradually drop away from her like leaves in autumn, and leave her a pining solitary creature.

Yet, " they that enter into a state of marriage, (says an old English writer,) cast a die of the greatest contingency—the greatest in the world, next to the last throw for eternity." Life or death, felicity or lasting sorrow, are in the power marriage.—Yet a woman ventures most, for she has no sanctuary to retire from a cruel husband. No ! she must weep at home, and brood over her own sorrow. She may indeed, complain to God, but in the causes of unkindness, she has no other appeal. It is, therefore, necessary, that each and every one should summon to their aid, all that reading, observation, and advice of parents and friends, and their short-lived experience have power to bestow. They should pause before they tie that gordian knot which death alone can unloose—before they decide on a measure of such incalculable importance.

If a beau comes to a serious declaration in favour of a female, she should affect no prudish airs of reserve. If she really feels an affection for him, and can indulge it with prudence, she should not scruple to acknowledge it, or treat him with the greatest openness and candor. This will engage favour, the esteem of every liberal and honest man. If she cannot receive him as a lover, she will not fail to retain him as a friend. No female should suffer her imagination to be dazzled by mere splendour. The glitter of wealth and equipage has induced many a poor girl to sacrifice her peace at the shrine of vanity ; and her nightly pillow, steeped in tears of regret, has soon told her that " better is a dinner of herbs where *love* is, than a stalled ox and *hatred* therewith." A good man alone is capable of true attachment, fidelity and affection. Others may feel a fugitive passion ; but on this, alas ! no dependance can be placed. Look for a person of *domestic* cast ; of what consequence to a wife are even the good qualities of her husband, if he be rarely or never at home ? It has often been asserted, that a reformed rake makes the best husband.—It may be so, but I would not advise any female, be her circumstances in life what they may, to risk her peace on so dangerous an experiment.

But, Mr. Editor, the writer of this communication, (who has scores of reasons for rejoicing

that she is an Old Maid,) having read in your paper every thing in favor of marriage that was possible for human ingenuity to suggest, much more than you would find to be true, if you could read the language of every heart, she thinks it is no more than fair that you should give the other side a hearing, although it should be equally destitute of truth, that your readers may be enabled to hear both sides, and then—get married—or live alone—as they choose :

The world has stamped a stigma upon old maids. Like the Jews of old, they are held in derision. They are a by-word, and have become the mockery of mankind. By common consent, fair game for every foul mouth, of every pert, and every print.

Let us institute an inquiry. What high honors are consigned to the married ladies of the age? To be titled Mrs.—. To be set at the head of a table. To take an airing in a carriage a mile, once a month. To tie the bow of a ribbon on the right side, instead of the left. To be head of the nursery department. To sue for clothing, furniture and pin money, to a mighty master, who claims title to their person, and uses or abuses their property at pleasure. These are great acquisitions of honor, ever to be had in remembrance.

Let us enquire what happiness there is in the condition of a married woman. To be lorded over by a lofty toned master, and sometimes a monster—to hear that her dress is not tasty—that her apartments are in disorder—breakfast is too early, or too late—not well served up—the dinner is raw, or too much roasted—the pastry is horrible—the desert illly chosen, and badly flavored—the beverage too hot or too cold, too strong or too weak—the servants are not eyed with care, nor ordered with discretion—and the children bawl like bedlamites. These make up a part of the delights of the day. But she has others. The house is to be kept in order. To effect this, she commences sweeping, scrubbing, scouring and washing. The eating preparation is as everlasting as life. Brewing, baking, boiling, frying, stewing, potting, pickling, preserving, stalk along. As clothing is in perpetual decay, this induces making, mending, ekeing, patching, piecing, knitting and darning—beside other instructions and cares, necessary to be bestowed on a family; and the attentions, and the civilities, which custom and good breeding require, in receiving company. After all this discipline of the day, she is often kept awake with midnight curtain lectures; and now and then the beautiful music of a nursery, by way of refreshment. It is lamented that full justice is not done to this piece, for it is thought a very pretty portrait might be drawn of the paradise of a married woman, by a more able hand. In the mean time, and it is not uncommon, her mighty lord and master is in the sports of the field, or in those of the water;

or at the gaming table; or on a more criminal errand, to the frail sisters of the bee-hive.

The profits of a married life are quite equivalent to its honors. For S—S— embezzled \$30,000 of his wife's patrimony in a single year. Mr. M— spent \$9000 a year, beggared his family, and ended his career by giving up to his creditors. G—G— spent his fortune at cards; died broken-hearted; and his wife had the consolation to billet his children on her friends, and then look out for a livelihood. D—D—, after turning day into night, and night into day, for two years, died in a duel, and left the wide world as a legacy to his family. Such privileges and profits are incalculable, and stand as promising and powerful incentives to a married state.

The married, as they had a right to do, have made their choice. I, an old maid, have, as I had a right to do, made mine. They may take their honor, with its trial of privileged nothings; their happiness, with its suffering, servitude and subjection; their profit of delusive aspect, which ends in want, in widowhood, in dependence the most abject. They have bartered their bucket which held water, for a basket which holds none." H. B. M.

SUMMARY.

Another American novel.—From the Philadelphia press, early in June, will be issued "The Highlands, a tale of the Hudson." The scene is laid near the celebrated passage of the Hudson. Its appearance will be looked for with anxiety.

The Great Unknown.—In consequence of the failure of the house of Constable & Co. the eminent Edinburgh booksellers, Sir Walter Scott has lost a great part of his fortune. But a few years since the same distinguished writer suffered considerably by the failure of Ballantyne, the printer. It is stated that he has been compelled to take his oath that he is the author of the *Waverley novels*, in order to prove under the commission.

LITERARY PREMIUMS.

In order to render the next volume of the RURAL REPOSITORY more worthy of the patronage of its numerous subscribers, and with a further view of encouraging "native" literature, we now offer the following premiums—

1st.—For the best ORIGINAL TALE, or ESSAY, to occupy not more than four, nor less than two pages of the Repository—\$10.

2d.—For the second best ORIGINAL TALE or ESSAY, a set of Byron's works, handsomely bound.

3d.—For the best piece of MISCELLANEOUS POETRY, not to exceed eighty lines—a complete set of the Repository.

All communications must be directed to William B. Stoddard, Hudson, N. Y., and forwarded (post paid) prior to the first day of May next; when the premiums will be awarded by a committee of gentlemen selected for the purpose.

MARRIED,

In this city, on the 22d ult. by the Rev. Mr. Malcom, Mr. JOHN W. HODGE, to Miss MARY SCHAFER, both of this place.

On Tuesday evening last, by the Rev. Mr. Benedict, Mr. JOHN WATSON, to Miss ABIGAIL ANN HAZARD.

DIED,

In New-York, on the 22d ult. Mrs. NANCY BLANK, consort of Mr. Ephraim Blank, of this city, aged 26 years.



POETRY.

FOR THE RURAL REPOSITORY.
INDIAN SONG.

O, why should we weep that his life has fled,
That his breath has ceas'd, and low lies his head?
O, why should we weep that his spirit's gone,
That he's sunk to earth, now his work is done?

Though he is dead on earth, he lives above,
And looks upon us with a father's love;
He will watch our coming sorrows with grief,
And feel for our woes the pain of a chief.

Then we will dance around his shrouded bier,
And shed o'er his body the filial tear:
Then we'll bury him deep within the vale,
And with flowers perfume the passing gale.

But time will pass, and the white man will come,
And force the Indians onward to roam;
But we'll dance his dirge, for our time is brief,
The white man will plough o'er our slumb'ring chief.

HENRY.

FOR THE RURAL REPOSITORY.
MOREAU.

About half a mile from the City of Dresden stands the rude monument of Moreau. The inscription was "The hero Moreau fell here by the side of Alexander" some unknown person has erased the word hero and substituted in its place "Traitor" so deeply carved that it cannot be removed.

Where art thou, and where is he
Who with thee the battle led?
Where art thou, and where is he?—
Both are slumbering with the dead!
Yet his sleep is calm and still
As the unobstructed rill;
And the willow leaf doth wave
Proudly o'er Napoleon's grave;
For his fame however won
Traitor dared not look upon.

Where is he, and where art thou
Whom his glory shone upon?
He is dead—and thou art now
Starlight to a blazing sun.
What though at Alexander's side
Thy spirit from its temple hied?
Better hadst held thy sword in sheath
Than thus to die a traitor's death.—
A monarch's pride had willed thee great
But who can truth obliterate?

P.

FOR THE RURAL REPOSITORY.
TO THE BOSTON BARD.

Say, minstrel, has the ruthless dart
By dire consumption sent,
Found means to pierce thy hapless heart,
So oft and sadly rent?
If deep, the muses loss we mourn,
The minstrel's useless lyre;
With cords dissever'd, numbers torn,
In manhood's fiercest fire.
But hark! her guardian spirit cries
"Columbia's bard rejoice,

Thy notes in sweeter strains shall rise,
Thy genius and thy voice."

" For ne'er shall fell diseases break
The Poet's lofty soul,
When ready higher flights to take,
And richer numbers roll."

C.

Hudson, March 30th, 1826.

STANZAS.

Hast thou not seen by evening beam
A pair walk by yon breezy lake?
If bliss like theirs may be a dream,
Tread light lest thou the lovers wake.

Misfortune has no sting for them,
If both have health, inquiries rest;
They seem two roses on one stem,
That ask but sunshine to make blest.

Give me to pass my days like these
In some secluded, peaceful bower,
Where pride and scorn may never freeze,
Nor lordly avarice overpower.

They sing in Eastern song of lands,
Elysiums of happy lovers,
By whom a watchful angel stands
To see that nought unholy hovers.

They said it of the solitudes,
Where Love with happiest heart reposes,
Where, far from all peace-wrecking feuds,
He sleeps upon a couch of roses.

ENIGMAS.

" We know these things to be mere trifles."

Answer to puzzles in our last.

PUZZLE I.

Virtue, be thou to every bosom known;
In every breast do thou erect thy throe;
Reign, reign despotic with resistless sway,
Teach us thy God-like counsels to obey.
Undaunted then may we each vice defy,
Ever defended, Virtue being nigh.

PUZZLE II.—None.

NEW PUZZLES.

I.

Once most delightful to be seen,
I stood with youth and beauty crown'd,
Till cruel foes with weapons keen,
First threw me prostrate on the ground;

There as I wounded, helpless laid,
And rudely trod beneath their feet,
My colour chang'd, my strength decay'd
My body burnt with scorching heat.

At length, like corpse in hearse convey'd,
My scattered parts were hither sent,
Of which a steady pile being made,
Myself am my own monument.

Ponder this well, then look on me,
And think of man's mortality.

II.

Why is a silk hat like a counterfeit passion?

RURAL REPOSITORY.

Is printed and published every other Saturday, at One Dollar per annum, payable in advance, by WILLIAM B. STODDARD, at Ashbel Stoddard's Printing Office and Book Store, No. 135, Corner of Warren and Third Streets, Hudson—where communications may be left, or transmitted through the post-office.

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